

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLOUGH

Though the aforementioned plough types differ among themselves ^{407*} yet there are some basic characteristics which combine them all. This being explained by the fact that they all labour in nearly the same physical conditions, hence the basic requirements must be similar. In the following lines we will try to describe these basic similarities, leaving aside for the moment their points of differentiations.

1. The Base. This is the 'foot' of the plough and is composed of a wooden body with a rear butt end and a tapering fore end. Its total length attains some 110 cms, a breast breadth of about 20 cms, and a thickness of about 15 cms, at the butt end. The thickness decreases towards the sharp end of the base owing to the fact that the upper surface is chiselled downwards from the butt end to the sharp point. The base supports the share, the handles, and the beam, and all these are fixed in different manners which will be described below with the exception of the share which is universally fixed to the fore end by a nail [414].

2. The Share. This being an iron blade which takes the form of a spear head and a neck. It also varies in size according to the kind of plough and soil. The standard share, usually called 'Lisan 'Asfara' meaning the tongue of a sparrow - has the following dimensions: total length 45 cms, length of neck 15 cms, breadth of neck 11 cms, wings at broadest 15 cms. The share is fixed on the upper surface of the tapering end of the base by means of a screw or a strong nail, and the share point must protrude some five centimeters ahead of the base point. [414]
A garden plough has a smaller share in what concerns the total length: this being only about 30 cms, while that of the plough intended to work on light soils or sandy areas has the same dimensions as the standard share except the breadth of the neck reaches 14 cms, and the breadth of the wings attains some 20 cms. Consequently the garden share is lighter than the standard share while that of the sandy areas is the heaviest of all.

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4. The Handles. — There are four types of handles: the split handle in type I, the single handle in types II, III, VI, and VII, the double straight handles of type IV, and the double curved handles of type V. The method of fastening the handles to the base differ in each case. The handles of type I are attached to the base by means of a strong nail to each side. The same method is also applied to type IV. Of the single handle we have already spoken: it is inserted in a socket near the rear end of the base. Concerning type V the arms of the handle are fixed to the sides of the base by means of two iron bands which encircle both arms and the body of the base. Nails are not used in this case, and to make a solid and compact unit of both handles and base in this type wooden pegs are inserted between the two iron bands and the upper surface of the base to tighten the attachment of both components.

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There are also some differences as to the angle at which the handles are put to the base and consequently to the share. In the single handle of types II, III, VI, and VII, and in the case of the double handled type IV the angle is nearly a right one. Split handles of type I has an angle of about 100 to 110 degrees, while the angle reaches 120 degrees in type V. It goes without saying that the retreating handles of both types I and V gives the ploughman more ability to manouver the plough from behind and increases his weight or force on the handles and on the plough to regulate the depth of ploughing. The single handled plough may appear at first glance to be technically deficient in this respect: but the structure of such a plough especially that belonging to type II allow for this deficiency by means of a fairly heavy beam which — being curved — is centrally situated on the base, thus giving the plough a more balanced situation which is lacking to a certain extent in types III, VI and VII. In these types there is still some balance as to the pressure of the plough owing to the fact that the beam, though straight, rests on the base at a distance more centrally situated than that of types I and V where we find the end of the beam resting on the rear end of the base. In type IV the handles are but little retreating while the beam rests on the of the base.

3. The Grip. — The form of the grip in all these types fall in two categories, the transversal grip of the double handled ploughs belonging

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a plough. The beam of that type is fixed to the base by means of an iron band which encircles the base from underneath while its arms are fixed by nails to the beam. The iron band in this type and likewise in type III and VII is placed comparatively nearer to the middle of the base than to its rear. This being the case because in all these types the beam ends with a cavity in which the single handle of the plough is adjusted, thus the beam does not reach the rear end of the base, and simultaneously this special form of the beam end serves as a support or gives more strength to the way the handle is mounted on the base. In types I and V we find the iron band which fixes the beam to the base is placed on the rear of the base because the beam end penetrates between the split handles of type I and the double handles of type V. The beam of type IV also penetrates between the double handles of the plough, but it is fixed to the base by means of a strong nail or a screw. The curved beam of type II is fixed directly to the base by inserting its end in the special socket bored in the base. To strengthen such an attachment a small peg is drawn in the socket behind the inserted part of the beam.

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In type II it is very rare to find a tree branch or a piece of wood which can be carved to make the desired curve and still accomplishes the desired length of the beam. It became obligatory that an extension should be attached to the beam, and that is the cause that plough types of this kind are some times called a *Mehrat be waqla* meaning a plough with an extension.

The beam extensions which we observe in types IV and V are also obligatory from the technical point of view. As the pin of these two types (iron pin in type IV and a wooden pin in type V) does not regulate the angle of the plough, but serve only to keep the beam from jumping upwards, it became necessary that another device must be made to regulate the plough angle. This is accomplished by the beam extension which is commonly an upward curved piece of wood fixed at its lower end to the end of the beam by a wooden peg. The higher end of the extension is bored at different levels and by inserting a peg to which he rope connecting the plough to the yoke is fixed, the ploughman can change the angle of ploughing by putting the peg in a higher or a

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